

EXHIBIT 47

William Faulkner's Mississippi

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June 3, 1984

William Faulkner called it his little postage stamp of native soil. The 14 novels he set there, from "Sartoris" in 1929 to "The Reivers" in 1962, made it the most famous county in American literature: Yoknapatawpha County, Mississippi. Mention the name and you summon up images: courthouse square, back-country hamlet, sharecroppers' shacks along a gravel road, silent hunters waiting in a shadowy forest. Faulkner wrote, he said, by making the actual apocryphal. The real-life setting he apotheosized into Yoknapatawpha is Lafayette County, Mississippi. The town he called Jefferson is its county seat, Oxford.

No one writes about Faulkner without using such phrases as "tradition," "history" or "sense of the past." Lafayette County (pronounced La-fay-ette) gave him his subject. Oxford, 60 miles southeast of Memphis, was founded in 1836 on land purchased from the Chickasaw Indians. It was given its name by settlers who hoped a state college would be built there--a hope fulfilled in 1848, when the University of Mississippi was established just outside town. During the Civil War, Oxford was fought-over terrain. Grant moved through in 1862; Bedford Forrest later headquartered his Confederate troops there. In 1864 the town was burned by federal cavalrymen.

Faulkner died in 1962. Oxford has changed since then, in the way a town changes over two decades. In Faulkner's day Oxford had fewer than 5,000 people. They lived along tree-shaded streets laid out around a courthouse square. This core remains, but around it new subdivisions of ranch-style homes have grown up. Shopping malls and fast-food restaurants cluster around the bypass exits. The dry-goods stores have been replaced by boutiques and the town's two cotton gins turned into restaurants. Oxford now has 10,000 people, 18,500 counting the university.

The courthouse square is the center of both Oxford and Jefferson. "A Square," Faulkner called it in a burst of grandiloquence, "the courthouse in its grove the center; quadrangular around it, the stores, two-storey, the offices of the lawyers and doctors and dentists . . . school and church and tavern and bank and jail each in its ordered place."

Faulkner used to stand on the southwest corner of the square. Sometimes he studied the scene, and sometimes he simply looked straight ahead; some days he greeted friends and some days he ignored them completely. From that corner he could see the life of the town: the pickup trucks with rifles in their gun-racks;

the country people, white and black, who came into town on Saturdays and stood on the corners of the square, socializing as they waited for their rides home; the old men who sat on benches outside the courthouse.

Saturday afternoon no longer brings crowds to the corners of the square. When they renovated the courthouse three years ago, they took down the sign in its lobby that warned "\$5.00 Fine for Spitting on Floor," and they sandblasted the weather-stained Confederate memorial until it looked like plaster of Paris. The pickup trucks still park around the square, however, and the old men still gather on the benches.

Faulkner stood directly in front of a passage now labeled "Faulkner Alley." The drugstore next door, Holley's Gathright-Reed, was one of his haunts. Here Faulkner bought pipe tobacco--Balkan Soubranie and Edgeworth brands. He patronized the pharmacy's lending library, which loaned out paperbacks for 25 cents a book. The owner, Mac Reed, was a friend of his. Aston Holley, the pharmacist, remembers Faulkner as more than a customer. Faulkner taught Holley to ride a horse and drive a car and forgave him for denting the fender.

The landmarks of Jefferson are landmarks in Oxford. Northwest of the square, behind the federal courthouse on Jackson Avenue, is a huge ravine, the "deep ditch" through which Joe Christmas fled in "Light in August." The mansion where Flem Snopes lived may be Cedar Oaks, on the northeast corner of town, or any of the big houses that line North and South Lamar Avenues. Sneed's Hardware, on the square, fits the description of the store where Jason Compson worked. (To show how quiet life in Oxford is: Recently Sneed's was burglarized. The burglars entered by kicking open the back door; they took \$80 in change.)

When Faulkner drew his map of Yoknapatawpha, he located the Compson mansion southeast of the square. On that spot in Oxford, off Buchanan Avenue, is a house called Magnolia Grove. Until recently, an iron fence ran across its front. In the early 1900s, the family who lived there had a mentally handicapped son. Like Benjy Compson in "The Sound and the Fury," the boy would stare through the fence at passers-by.

Faulkner located the Sartoris plantation north of Oxford. A house he may have patterned it on, however, stands on the southwest corner of town, off Old Taylor Road. This is Rowan Oak, Faulkner's home.

Rowan Oak is hard to find. A wooden gate and tall hedge screen the point where its driveway enters the street. The entrance is actually less conspicuous today, even though marked, than it was when Faulkner put up a large sign blaring "Private Yard PLEASE Do Not Trespass." Seventy yards back, at the far end of its cedar-shadowed driveway, the house is just barely visible.

Rowan Oak was built around 1840. Faulkner bought and named it in 1930. It was his permanent residence--a traditional southern mansion for the greatest southern writer--but he lived there only off and on. After receiving the Nobel Prize for literature in 1954, he traveled overseas for the State Department. Earlier he spent long stretches in Hollywood as a screenwriter. They say he once told the studio he was going home to finish work on a scene. The studio assumed he meant his apartment in Los Angeles; not for a week did they

succeed in tracking him down to Rowan Oak. The story belongs to the Faulkner myth, not to the Faulkner reality, but it continues to spread.

The house has been preserved as it was at the time of Faulkner's death. Two of its rooms mark it as a writer's home. The living room is lined with books and decorated with artworks--some painted by Faulkner's mother, some presented by foreign governments. The other room is Faulkner's study. It is simply furnished: a homemade desk, a bookcase, chairs, a bed. Against a window, silhouetted by the afternoon sun, is the old Underwood portable typewriter on which Faulkner wrote. He outlined "A Fable" on the wall, penciling installments headed "Monday" through "Sunday" around one corner.

Rowan Oak's other rooms show how upper-class southerners lived in Faulkner's day. The house is heated by space heaters and cooled by screen windows. Its kitchen is surprisingly antiquated; it was not Faulkner's wife Estelle who cooked. Behind the house are the outbuildings--the cookhouse, where Faulkner smoked ham and bacon, and the stables.

Other places in Oxford are associated with Faulkner. On the northwest corner of the square are the offices of Freeland & Gafford. Formerly this was the office of Phil Stone, Faulkner's friend and mentor. Here the novelist and the lawyer talked of esthetics and Balzac.

On the Ole Miss campus, Faser Hall stands on the site of the old university post office. In the early 1920s, Faulkner was postmaster here, until the Post Office acted on complaints that he avoided selling stamps and customarily threw away letters. Nearby is the smokestack of the university powerhouse. Faulkner wrote "As I Lay Dying" here, working on the back of an overturned wheelbarrow.

In Jack Cofield's photography studio, in the Warehouse shopping concourse on Jackson Avenue one block east of the square, the walls are a gallery of Faulkner photos. Col. J.R. Cofield, Jack's father, was Faulkner's de facto official photographer. The photos cover four decades. Faulkner appears, in the 1920s, as a dark-haired, dark-eyed young novelist, quietly meeting the camera's stare. He changes, by 1962, into a gray-haired man of letters, dapper in his red hunting jacket. Col. Cofield took snapshots, too--of Faulkner jumping his horse over a fence, hosting a costume breakfast party or steering his boat. At his daughter's wedding reception, he greets guests in tuxedo and vest. "The only really smiling picture I ever made of the little man," Col. Cofield wrote in a caption.

Lafayette County is half farmland, half forest. Since Faulkner wrote, pine forests have replaced many cottonfields. Kudzu has carpeted the hillsides. (Kudzu is a Japanese ivy, imported to fight erosion. It spreads and climbs like a jungle creeper, covering fences and trees, turning the roadside into a ghostly tableau.)

Across the county's northern edge runs the Tallahatchie River. The highway crosses it on a levee, because in the spring its backwaters can become a swamp, a mile-long stretch of yellow-brown water, lapping against cypress trees and tangles of drowned vegetation. Ten miles south of Oxford is the second river. This is the Yocona--pronounced Yokna, and derived from its original name, Yoknapatawpha. The river bottoms are

where Faulkner's characters hunted. In recent years, a few bears have come back to them, making their way upriver from the forests along the Mississippi.

When Faulkner created the hamlet of Frenchman's Bend, he described it as "a section of rich river-bottom country lying twenty miles southeast of Jefferson . . . straddling into two counties and owing allegiance to neither." This description fits the little town of Toccopola, southeast of Oxford. In describing the hamlet, however, Faulkner drew on the village of Taylor--also in the Yocona valley, but 10 miles southwest of Oxford.

Taylor (population around 340) is Mississippi's smallest incorporated city. Its downtown is a post office and two storefronts. One of these is a grocery which on weekend nights doubles as a catfish house (a plate of catfish is \$4.25, a "bunch" \$5.25; a homemade fried pie, heated in a microwave, is 50 cents). The other store houses a surprisingly avant-garde art gallery, run by two members of the Ole Miss community. The Old South endures, however; across the street is a sawmill, and just down the road is one of Lafayette County's last two working cotton gins.

The name Carothers Edmonds--the name of a character in "Go Down, Moses"--appears on turn-of-the-century town records. Around 1905 the mayor here was named Bundren. In "As I Lay Dying," it is the Bundren family members who trek across Yoknapatawpha to bury their mother at Jefferson, their wagon shadowed by buzzards. West of town is Varner's Store, whose namesake figures in "The Hamlet." Two miles southwest, at the back of a pasture, screened by cedars and grown up in weeds, is an abandoned plantation house. This may have been the original of the Old Frenchman's Place, on whose grounds Civil War gold was rumored to be buried.

The University of Mississippi is the main trustee of Faulkner's legacy. The university owns and administers Rowan Oak. The Mississippi Room of the university library preserves Faulkner's Nobel Prize medallion and other awards and memorabilia. Every summer since 1974, the school has run the "Faulkner and Yoknapatawpha" seminar. This one-week program, held the first week in August, each year brings 100 participants to Oxford for lectures, discussions and field trips into the town and county. The conference has generated an annual program of black folk music; a musical comedy based on the Faulkner short story, "The Battle of Harrykin Creek"; and readers'-theater dramatizations of Faulkner's work. "We're dreaming of a ballet," says Evans Harrington, chairman of the English department. Harrington is trying to arrange choreography for a 95-page ballet based on Faulkner's works. "We hope to premiere it here in Oxford within the next few years."

Oxford has come to terms with Faulkner; the town remains divided on the cottage industry of Faulkneriana. The paths taken by Faulkner's two nephews illustrate the split. Jimmy Faulkner has gone on the college lecture circuit with a slide-show presentation, "Knowing William Faulkner." His brother Chooky, on the other hand, will edge out of a room if he senses reporters or scholars.

Although Oxonians have welcomed the Faulkner trade of the last decade, they have not gone in for hard-sell tactics. In January, the city erected two billboards urging tourists to visit Oxford, home of Ole Miss and of William Faulkner. Faulkner purists protested this commercialization. Although the city has put Rowan Oak on its driving tour--which will make it easier to locate--no further projects are planned.

"Three kinds of people come in here to buy books about Faulkner," comments Richard Howorth, owner of Square Books, a bookshop overlooking the courthouse. "About two people a day come in here just because they've come to Oxford to see Faulkner's home. The main season is summer. You get professors, teachers and students." In April, the group included Colombian novelist Gabriel Garcí'a Ma'rque'z, who made an unannounced flying visit to the home of the writer he had called "my master."

"The second group is from Oxford. They've decided--well, they're talking about this guy, so I'd better see what it's all about. And they're the ones who 30 years ago were calling him Count No 'Count.

"And then there are the ones who come in here and say, 'My great-uncle was Snopes.' No, they never say Snopes, but they'll say they've heard their great-uncle is in this book somewhere. I've been astonished at some of them--you can tell they've come up out of the woods. They seem as out of place in a bookstore as I would be in--oh, a hog-butcher camp."

Faulkner said that he wanted "to be hauled to the cemetery by a wagon and mules." That wish he did not get. On the day of his funeral, a hearse carried the casket from Rowan Oak to the cemetery, through a town whose stores were closed in his honor.

Faulkner's grave is on the north side of the cemetery, across North 16th Street from St. Andrew's Methodist Church. The plot cuts into a hillside; a retaining wall encloses the graves of Faulkner and his wife Estelle. The headstone says only "Faulkner." On the slab is cut his full name, William Cuthbert Faulkner, the dates bounding his life and the benediction "Beloved, Go With God." On the day that Garcí'a Ma'rque'z visited Oxford, two sprigs of white spirea and one of redbud were left carefully centered on the marble.

This is the only grave to bear the name Faulkner; the writer was the first in his family to add the "u." His brother John's grave, on the next hill south, is inscribed "Fa(u)lkner." At the top of the hill, distinguished by an obelisk, is the Falkner family plot.

Faulkner's grandmother's monument quotes Proverbs: "Her children rise and call her blessed." The same words appear on Eula Varner Snopes' monument in "The Town." On the grave of Faulkner's brother Dean, killed in an airplane crash in 1935, Faulkner had cut "I bare him on eagles' wings and brought him unto me." The same epitaph had honored Bayard Sartoris in Faulkner's first Yoknapatawpha novel. The borrowings show how, in Lafayette County and Yoknapatawpha, the actual and the apocryphal draw upon each other.

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